

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01

/039 W

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R 151126Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3708

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 10085

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, IR

SUBJ: MINISTRY OF LABOR'S DENIAL OF PUBLISHED REPORTS CONCERNING
PLANS TO EXPEL FOREIGN WORKERS

1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEHRAN JOURNAL AND FARSI LANGUAGE KAYHAN
IN EDITIONS OF OCTOBER 12 CARRIED ALMOST IDENTICAL ARTICLES
QUOTING UNNAMED OFFICIALS OF MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
AS SAYING THAT AS MANY AS 26,000 FOREIGN NATIONALS WORKING IN
IRAN AND THEIR FAMILIES FACED DEPORTATION BECAUSE OF ILLEGAL
WORK STATUS AND/OR NON-CONTRIBUTION TO IRANIAN DEVELOPMENTAL
GOALS. ARTICLES STATED EXPULSIONS MIGHT BEGIN IN JANUARY 1976
FOLLOWING EXPIRY OF THREE-MONTH GRACE PERIOD. ARTICLES STATED
THAT IN MANY INSTANCES FOREIGN EXPERTS HAD FAILED TO TRAIN
IRANIAN COUNTERPARTS, THUS PROLONGING IRANIAN DEPENDENCE ON
OUTSIDE EXPERTISE. (INSIDE-PAGE FEATURE ARTICLE IN SAME
OCTOBER 12 EDITION OF TEHRAN JOURNAL QUOTED MINISTRY OF LABOR
OFFICIALS AS PLEASED WITH SMOOTH INTEGRATION OF SOME 40,000
FOREIGNERS IN BUSINESS AND CULTURAL LIFE OF COUNTRY.)

2. OCTOBER 14 EDITIONS OF BOTH TEHRAN JOURNAL AND
KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL, HOWEVER, CARRIED STORIES ENTITLED
QUOTE RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN WORKERS TO CONTINUE UNQUOTE
RESPECTIVELY. KAYHAN PERSIAN LANGUAGE EDITION OF OCTOBER
14 PRINTED ARTICLE WITH LEAD QUOTE 8,000 FOREIGN SPECIALISTS
TO BE EMPLOYED UNQUOTE. TEHRAN JOURNAL ARTICLE OF OCTOBER
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14 QUOTED LABOR MINISTER MOINI AS SAYING, ON 13 OCTOBER,

THAT PUBLISHED REPORTS ON MINISTRY PLANS TO EXPEL FOREIGN WORKERS WERE ERRONEOUS, THAT FOREIGN EXPERTS WERE VITAL TO DEVELOPMENT, BUT THAT MINISTRY EXPECTED SUCH FOREIGN EMPLOYEES TO TRAIN IRANIANS ACCORDING TO TERMS OF THEIR CONTRACTS.

3. EMBASSY LABOR REPORTING OFFICER SPOKE WITH MINISTRY OF LABOR DEPUTY MINISTER NASSERI ON OCTOBER 12 AND SOUGHT HIS REACTION TO PRESS ARTICLES APPEARING THAT MORNING. NASSERI STATED THAT IT WAS LONG-STANDING POLICY OF MINISTRY OF LABOR THAT EXPATRIATE SPECIALISTS SHOULD BE USED BY THEIR EMPLOYERS IN SUCH FASHION THAT MAXIMUM USE BE MADE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR TRAINING IRANIAN COUNTERPARTS. ALTHOUGH NASSERI HAD NOT YET HAD OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK OVER CONTENT OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, HE BELIEVED THAT JOURNALISTS HAD OVERREACTED TO STATEMENTS MADE TO THEM AND HAD SENSATIONALIZED ISSUE. IN ANY CASE, SAID NASSERI, IT WAS THE EMPLOYERS WHO WERE MAINLY AT FAULT FOR IMPROPER USE OF EXPATRIATE EXPERTS AND TARGET OF MINISTRY'S CRITICISMS WERE THOSE EMPLOYERS WHO WERE FAILING TO USE THEIR OPPORTUNITIES, NOT EXPERTS

THEMSELVES. NASSERI INDICATED THAT CLARIFICATION FORTH-COMING (APPARENTLY REFERRING TO MOINI'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON OCTOBER 13).

4. COMMENT: STORIES CARRIED BY PRESS ON OCTOBER 12 WERE APPARENTLY BASED ON STATEMENTS MADE BY LESSER-RANKING OFFICIAL OF MINISTRY OF LABOR WHICH WERE NOT CHECKED OUT IN ADVANCE WITH SENIOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS. THIS IS NOT FIRST INSTANCE OF SUCH HAPPENING, AND MINISTER MOINI IN SEVERAL PREVIOUS INSTANCES THIS YEAR HAS HAD TO GO BEFORE PRESS TO CLARIFY GOVERNMENT POLICIES CONCERNING HIRING OF FOREIGN WORKERS, A SENSITIVE ISSUE IN IRANIAN SOCIETY. PUBLICATION OF MISLEADING AND SENSATIONAL ARTICLES SUCH AS THOSE APPEARING ON OCTOBER 12, DESPITE THE NEXT DAY'S DENIALS, CERTAINLY WILL NOT HELP TO PROMOTE CONFIDENCE AMONG THOSE INTENDING TO DO BUSINESS IN IRAN AND CAME AT A TIME WHEN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS FOR PROFIT SHARING, PRICE CONTROL, AND SALE OF COMPANY SHARES TO THE PUBLIC ARE ALREADY CREATING MANY UNCERTAINTIES IN MINDS OF POTENTIAL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, EXPULSION, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, FOREIGN WORKERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TEHRAN10085
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750357-0552
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751054/aaaabvbk.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTRY OF LABOR'S DENIAL OF PUBLISHED REPORTS CONCERNING PLANS TO EXPEL FOREIGN WORKERS
TAGS: ELAB, IR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006